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Oceans and the law of the sea

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Environment and sustainable development

Letter dated 30 September 1998 from the Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the joint statement of Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Saparmurat Niyazov, President of Turkmenistan, on issues relating to the Caspian Sea, signed at Tehran on 8 July 1998.

We shall be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 38, 93 and 94.

(Signed) Hadi **Nejad-Hosseinian**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran
to the United Nations

(Signed) Aksoltan T. **Ataeva**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations

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Annex

Joint statement of 8 July 1998 by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the President of Turkmenistan

In a joint meeting held to review issues relating to the Caspian Sea, Saparmurat Niyazov, President of Turkmenistan, and Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, expressed their satisfaction over the outcome of the meeting, which demonstrated mutual understanding and the will of the two countries to reach full agreement on the Caspian Sea. They also examined the progress achieved towards the completion of Caspian Sea legal regime consistent with the Declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Caspian Littoral States in November 1996 in Ashgabat. The two Presidents agreed as follows:

1. The two sides reaffirmed the inalterability of the principle of unanimity of the five littoral States in all decisions related to the legal status of the Caspian Sea.

2. The two sides reiterated that the Caspian Sea and its resources are the common heritage of the littoral States and that the completion of the legal regime and the resolution of issues on the exploitation of the resources of the Caspian Sea is exclusively the right of these five littoral States while adopting the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea.

3. The two sides reaffirmed that, until the finalization of the new legal regime, the Treaty on Friendship between Iran and Russia of 1921 and the Agreement on Trade and Shipping between Iran and the Soviet Union of 1940 are the sole international documents governing legal issues relating to the Caspian Sea.

4. The two sides were of the view that a condominium arrangement for the common use of the Caspian Sea by the littoral States through assuming a sectoral coastal strip as the national zone is the most appropriate basis for the legal regime. The extent of national zones and the procedures for common use of the Caspian Sea will be subject to supplementary agreements.

5. In case of division, the two sides emphasized the principle of equal share for all littoral States and equitable exploitation of the resources of the Caspian Sea.

6. The two sides also underlined the need for preserving a unified legal regime for the sea, on the seabed, and under the seabed.

7. The two sides believed that the Caspian Sea should be a sea of peace and friendship and an arena for beneficial cooperation on the basis of mutual respect among the littoral States. They also underlined the need for the peaceful use and demilitarization of the Caspian Sea.

8. Considering the unique environment of the Caspian Sea and for the purpose of its protection, which is the responsibility of all littoral States, the two sides objected to any action that may cause irreparable damage to the environment of the Caspian Sea.

9. Underlining the essential need for cooperation among the littoral States in all matters relating to the Caspian Sea with the aim of expanding this friendly cooperation, the two sides called upon all littoral States to employ their utmost efforts for the earliest completion of the Caspian Sea legal regime.

DONE at Tehran on 8 July 1998 (corresponding to Tir 17, 1377, solar calendar) in two copies in Turkmen, Persian, Russian and English. The Turkmen, Persian and Russian texts are equally authentic. In case of discrepancy, the English text shall prevail.

For the Islamic Republic of Iran:

(Signed) Seyyed Mohammad **Khatami**

For Turkmenistan:

(Signed) S. **Niyazov**